Oh, that explains it







# Michigan Merit Curriculum High School Graduation Requirements

estions & Answers • Questions & Answers • Qu





#### **ASSESSMENT**

#### What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says (from various sections of law)

Sec. 1278a(4)(b) A school district or public school academy shall base its determination of whether a pupil has successfully completed the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to a credit at least in part on the pupil's performance on the assessments developed or selected by the department or on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

Sec. 1278a(4)(c) A school district or public school academy shall also grant a pupil a credit if the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the department or the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

Sec. 1278a(3) The requirements for a high school diploma are in addition to any local requirements imposed by the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy. The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy, as a local requirement for a high school diploma, may require a pupil to complete some or all of the subject area assessments, the Michigan Merit Examination, or MI Access assessments, if appropriate for the pupil.

#### **Questions & Answers**

#### I. Q: Who determines the type of secondary course/credit assessment a district could choose?

**A:** The local district has the flexibility to determine when an assessment(s) is given, as well as develop or select district or state assessments that measure students' understanding of the content expectations for credit.

# 2. Q: Who determines the score a student or students must meet to pass or meet the assessment requirements?

**A**: A district can select or develop a local assessment for which it establishes a passing score. Alternatively, the district can elect to use a state assessment, in which the state establishes a passing or cut score.

### 3. Q: What if the student has passed the class, but fails the assessment? Does the student fail the course?

**A:** Districts continue to have authority to establish policy on this issue. While the law requires a district to base a student's successful completion, at least in part, on student performance on subject area assessments, the amount the assessment counts toward a student's total grade is up to the district. Therefore, awarding credit is a local district decision.



#### 4. Q: Will the state be developing credit assessments?

A: By April 20, 2009, the Michigan Department of Education must develop or select and approve assessments that school districts and public school academies may use to determine whether a student has successfully completed a credit required by the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The assessments for each credit must measure a student's understanding of the content expectations or guidelines for that credit. The Department must develop or select and approve assessments for at least each of the following credits: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Earth Science, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, World History and Geography, United States History and Geography, Economics, Civics, and English in grades 9 through 12.

The department is currently naming these Secondary Credit Assessments will be developed in two formats, I) end of course assessments, which can be used for testing out purposes, and 2) testlets or modular tests that could be used as formative assessments throughout instruction. The Department is currently developing assessments for Algebra I and Geometry that will be piloted in January 2007.

In addition, MDE will be developing material to assist school districts and Public School Academies in implementing the Michigan Merit Curriculum, including developing guidelines for alternative instructional delivery methods.

## 5. Q: Will assessments be created for integrated math sequences and integrated science sequences?

**A:** Not at this time. These sequences are optional versus mandated in the Michigan Merit Curriculum. Therefore, districts using an integrated math approach should determine at what point in the integrated math sequence students are ready to be assessed on the course content expectations for Algebra I, etc. Districts also will be responsible for selecting the credit assessment to measure a student's understanding of the content expectations for credit. The goal of creating the testlets or modular tests is to permit students who are receiving integrated or applied instruction to be assessed on the state's Secondary Credit Assessments. Districts would need to determine how the Secondary Credit Assessments would be divided among the grade levels and courses.

